



HUMANISM IN THE NOVELS OF MULK RAJ ANAND

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ABSTRACT

Humanism that introduced in the 14th century is in fact a movement which highlighted on the exploration of human being in this world. The main idea of humanism is to focus on how to lead a virtuous life in the society. So far as Renaissance humanism is concerned it is mainly a movement that started in Italy and spread to Europe in 14th century. Renaissance Humanism mainly spread by means of business and printing press. Emphasis on beauty and value of human's individual life are the main issues of humanism during renaissance period. This research paper aims at discussing concept of humanism as seen in the works of Mulk Raj Anand. Moreover, it aims at discussing the impact of various incidents and movements upon him to become a writer of the oppressed class. Anand's concern with the oppressed and the suppressed people and his zeal to uplift them will also be discussed in this research paper.

KEYWORDS: Renaissance, Humanism, Oppressed, Upliftment, Downtrodden

1. INTRODUCTION

It was in the nineteenth century that the society was emerging towards a sense of nationalism. Moreover, a spirit to build a modern India was also present in the minds of the Indians. The same can also be seen in literature, especially in poetry, fictional and non fictional works. As a part of non fictional works, novels are also influenced with these aforesaid characteristics of the Indian society. The same is also seen in the works of Mulk Raj Anand particularly in his famous novels like 'Untouchable', 'Coolie', 'Two Leaves and a Bud', 'Seven Summers: The Story of an Indian Childhood' and in his other works. As Anand spent time with Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, Gandhi's concept of humanism always touched his mind and this sense of humanism is used as a major theme in his literary works.

Almost all the novels of Mulk Raj Anand project him as a humanist with a sincere and intense desire to promote the welfare and happiness of those who are treated unjustly by the majority of the people for one reason or another. The miserable plight of the working and down trodden classes of people have become the characters in his works like 'Untouchable', 'Coolie', 'Two Leaves and a Bud' and in his other works.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study tries to focus on:

- Anand as Humanist
- Impact of The thirties Movement upon Mulk Raj Anand
- Anand's Concern for the Under-Dog

3. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Authors and scholars have already discussed Mulk Raj Anand as a successful novelist in Indian Writing in English. Many of his distinctive features as a novelist have also been discussed by many scholars and authors. Some of such authors and scholars

are discussed in the following lines.

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar considers Mulk Raj Anand as a major writer of Indian Novel in English. In his book titled as 'Indian Writing in English', Iyengar regards Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao as the three major writers of Indian novel in English. In his book, Iyengar discusses Mulk Raj Anand as a successful novelist of India.

M. K. Naik in his book titled as 'Mulk Raj Anand' discusses the Anand as a novelist and his narrative nature. Many of his distinctive features have also been discussed in this book. A detailed analysis of his novels is also made by M K Naik in this book.

C. Paul Verghese in 'Essays on Indian Writing in English' narrates Mulk Raj Anand as a successful novelist in India. His sense for the human and his contemporary society have also been discussed in this book by the author.

G. S. B. Gupta in his work titled as 'Mulk Raj Anand- A Study of his Fiction in Humanist Perspective' analyses the humanistic approach of Anand. Moreover, his attitude to the working class and downtrodden is also discussed in this book.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study relies on primary and secondary sources and brings out a descriptive analysis of collected resources.

A. Primary Resources:

In order to collect data, all the works of Mulk Raj Anand have been studied. Some of his novels like 'Untouchable', 'Coolie' and 'Two Leaves and a Bud' have been studied in order to find his sense of humanism.

During study, all his novels as mentioned earlier have been analysed to see some other aspects of literature present in them. Moreover, characters of all these novels have been studied to see humanism present in them.

B. Secondary Sources:

Many of the books which have been composed by various authors have been studied. Many of the famous books composed by the authors like K. R. S. Iyengar, M. K. Naik, V. S. Prithett, K. N. Sinha, C. Paul Verghese etc. have been studied as these books deal with approach and attitudes of Mulk Raj Anand as a successful novelist in Indo-Anglian literature.

5. ANALYSIS:

Mulk Raj Anand writes realistically about the lives of the downtrodden and oppressed. In all his novels, he exposes the ugly face of the society with a view to bringing end to these people. His philosophy of life which is one of naturalism and humanism seem to convey the messages that the poor lot of bottom dogs is a matter of economic determinism but it can be reformed by love, sympathy and a human consideration of man as man.

5.1 Anand as Humanist:

In his novels, he portrays the doomed lines of the downtrodden and the oppressed. His protagonists who are a sweeper, a coolie or a peasant are all victims of exploitation, class hatred, race hatred and inhuman cruelty. With all his observation, Anand has become a vigorous champion of the oppressed and the downtrodden and this is the reason that draws attention of all readers.

Almost all the novels of Mulk Raj Anand project him as a humanist with a sincere and intense desire to promote the welfare and happiness of those who are treated unjustly by the majority of the people for one reason or another. He depicts the miserable plight of the poverty stricken classes of people. Anand is a novelist with a mission and his novels are written with a purpose and it is to arouse the social conscience. Anand has himself seen the misery, the wretchedness and the squalor of the lower classes of Hindu society and his conscience made him rebellious against injustice being done to them.

Anand's humanism has radically no new concept to offer. Yet, his humanism has been achieved by the acceptance of the principles of perfect equality between men and women, the brotherhood of all men and the right of every person to enjoy social, economic, political, intellectual and economic freedom. Forces which destroy the fundamental rights of common men and women should be prevented by the use of fraternity and brotherhood-as said and believed by Anand. All these ideas associated by the sense of humanism of Mulk Raj Anand have made him a writer of the masses.

5.2 Impact of The thirties Movement upon Mulk Raj Anand:

Many of the novels of Anand cannot be fully appreciated unless studied in relation to the movement of the Nineteen-Thirties in Western Europe. Anand stayed in London for over two decades

from 1924 to 1945. He was therefore deeply influenced by the progressive Movement in literature that flourished in the Thirties. In London, Anand came under numerous literary, political and social influences and it is in them that the sources of his synthesis of Marxist and humanist thought can be seen. In this connection, the following statement made by Anand himself:

"You will find that amorphous as my books are. I did stick to the novel form, more or less, as an imaginative interpretation of Indian life rather than use it as a vehicle to sermonize. And the posing of the problems of human beings in the Thirties by people like Malraux, Celine and Hemingway gave the necessary sense of discrimination to my own treatment of the predicament of our people as against the European view." (Cawasjee, 1977)

Anand believes that the work of a genuine creative writer is inspired by a mission. He seems to be in full agreement with Arnold's dictum that literature at bottom is the criticism of life. He is strongly committed to his creed and in his opinion "any writer who said that he was not interested in a condition humane was wither posing or yielding to a fanatical love of isolation- a perverse and clever defence of the adolescent desire to be different. (Anand, 1957)

5.3 Anand's Concern for the Under-Dog:

Anand's humanism makes him a novelist with a mission and it is to write for the betterment and upliftment of the underdog of society. He considers that a truly humanist art is commensurate with the need of our times and his humanism results from his consciousness of the need to help raise the untouchables, the peasants, the coolies and the other suppressed member of the society.

Anand is a crusader in the cause of humanity. He writes not for art sake but for the sake of man, for refining and ennobling him, for his fellow human beings and for inspiring him into action calculated. Anand is not a narrator of fairy tales for mere amusement or a creator of a escapist literature. On the contrary, he has always written to emphasise the essential dignity of man despite his weakness and to engender compassion in the hearts of men for the oppressed and the downtrodden.

6. CONCLUSION

Mulk Raj Anand's humanism makes him use of art for the service of humanity. Caste and national barriers have no significance for him and he regards all mankind as one. He is the first Indo-Anglian novelist who depicts the tragic plight of the underdogs of Indian society. In his novels, he narrates the story of these downtrodden people and analyses the causes of their sufferings and finally try to fulfil the purpose which is to bring justice and love for men.

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